7:Roquette-Pinto--1 E-4, 5 (no date) 1938 SP17 Nambicuara SP17 (ca. 1912)

Chapter VIII

Physical Anthropology and Pathology

123 [175] Unfortunately in 1912 the Nambicuara were not yet sufficiently accustomed to the presence of strangers in their mountains. In spite of their bribed willingness, they viewed my research with justifiable suspicion.

101 124 The Indians who were examined belonged to the following groups:[2] Cocozu, Anunze, Tagnani and Tawite [Tauité][1]. Among the Uaintaçu, a still hostile group, I was able to gather only one incomplete set of data. The state of excitement of the Indian during the examination did not permit better results.

142 Their skin is the color of yellowish burned sienna, dark among the Cocozu, light among the others. Some Tagnani individuals have an almost pinkish complexion. Many nearly black types are found among the Indians of the Juruena and Juina rivers; those are the darkest Indians in Brazil. On the Roquette-Childe color scale used in the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro, the coloring of these Indians varies between numbers six and ten.

The skin is coarse and wrinkled.

The hair is straight and coarse (lissotrichous). Some individuals have wavy hair similar to that of the Polynesians. The Indians 302 usually pull out their body and face hair and cut it on the forehead with a bivalve shell. [176] A few of them leave some strands of hair above or below the lips.

[264] Nearly all permit their nails to grow freely, for they make useful implements to tear the meat at mealtime.

[147] The soles of their feet never become thickly callused as those of Negroes who go barefoot.

142 Their feet are relatively large, their legs slender and muscular. The abdomen is prominent, the hands small. The chest is knotty [encordoado] and not very large.

141 The measurements which we were able to obtain for normal adult males are shown in Tables A[2] and B.

2 [See pp. 66-67, category 116. —Analyst]
1 [Nambicuara sub-groups— Analyst]

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Indians are as well protected against the actinic action of the sun as if they were wearing the thick clothing of the Sahara tribes. Because they are nude, however, the air circulates freely around their body, reducing the heat and hastening the evaporation of perspiration.

"If exposed to sunlight, in accordance with the property described above, urucu absorbs only slightly the heat of the sun, reflecting the red rays and also the heat rays. For this reason the white man or one with slight pigmentation, when smeared with urucu, does not perspire excessively as does the Negro under the same circumstances.

"In view of the properties ascribed to urucu by our experiments, and of the widespread usage of this dye among the Indians of tropical America, we believe that it should be considered not as merely ornamental but as an effective means of protection against tropical light and heat."

164 [184] The manifestations and evolution of the disease lead us to believe that it is a dermatomycosis. The habitat of the pathogenic fungus is probably to be found in the soil. This would explain why the personnel of the Line, who have lived among the Nambicuara for years, have not yet contracted the disease. This also applies to the Paressi, [513] who are now in contact with the diseased Indians. Both groups, unlike the Nambicuara, make use of hammocks and never sleep on the ground.

To this day, no microscopic examination of the scales has been made, and I am not responsible for this failure. In 1912 the Indians [123] would not allow us to collect the necessary materials; they were still suspicious.

/212 cont./

278 184 southern boundary of the territory of these Indians toward the Amazon. Among the most remote Ñambikwara, those on the right bank of the Rio Juruena whose material culture is extremely poor and who do not have a sorcerer, all the men know how to prepare curare. Among the Tagnani living in the region of Campos Novos and the Rio October 12 and the Çabanè living between the campos of Vilhena and the Rio Commémoration, the preparation of curare is reserved either for the chief or more often for the sorcerer (Çabanè). The Tamandé of the Roosevelt River have refused to give any precise information on curare, the preparation of which is the exclusive prerogative of the sorcerer; their arrow poison, which I was able to study, is identical to that of the other groups. The Ñambikwara of the Cabixi River also use curare, but I did not obtain /213/ any details about its preparation from these Indians, who visited our camp but spent only one evening there.

278 126 I was present at the preparation of curare for the first time among the Ñambikwara of the right bank of the Rio Juruena.

[114] Among the objects gathered for our collections were several poisoned arrows. The first experiments carried out on various animals either with the arrows or with the wash-water of the points revealed a symptomatology recalling that of curare.

[116] [117] Our two chief informants, who were called José Maria and Julio by the civilized people, were influential personages in the group and the principal authors of the massacre of the North American, Protestant mission of the Juruena in 1930.

[123] Patient negotiations led them to show me the plant used by them, and then a little later, to let me be present at the preparation of the poison itself.

Not without fear of being hoaxed, I tested the prepared product: its action was identical in every respect to that of the arrow poisons. The Ñambikwara had been honest.

[114] [62] Two months later in the campos of Vilhena the Çabanè sorcerer, who belonged to the mixed group composed of the